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ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SPECIALTY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Effective January 1, 2008

The MDPH has revised the eligibility criteria for Specialty Services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. In accordance with guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics, it is recommended that a comprehensive ASD Evaluation be administered by experienced clinician s familiar with the spectrum. The diagnosis should be confirmed by one of the following professionals familiar with the spectrum:

- a physician (typically a developmental pediatrician or neurologist)
- a licensed clinical psychologist
- an LMHC approved by DPH for this purpose

Written documentation that the child meets DSM -IV criteria for one of the five disorders under the ASD umbrella: Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Disorder, PDD - NOS (Pervasive Developmental Disorder -Not Otherwise Specified), Child Disintegrative Disorder, or Rett syndrome must be provided before Specialty Services can be initiated.

Diagnosis can be delayed for many reasons, including the limited availability of experienced clinicians in some parts of the state. In the event that an appointment for a diagnostic evaluation cannot be obtained within three months, written documentation from a pediatrician or other physician that a child has a preliminary diagnosis of ASD will be accepted on a temporary basis if it is accompanied by confirming results on an autism screening tool such as the Modified-Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT) or the Pervasive Developmental Disabilities Screening Test II (PDDSTII).^{*} The M-CHAT or similar screening tool can be administered by EI or SSP staff in conjunction with the pediatrician/family doctor's evaluation.

Confirmation that the child has been referred to a medical practice or clinical setting that can provide a full scale evaluation by professionals experienced in

diagnosing ASD in young children should be provided to the Specialty Service Provider when a child is referred.

Specialty Service Programs will be expected to maintain written documentation of the following:

- diagnosis on the autism spectrum from a comprehensive diagnostic center or clinician experienced in evaluating young children for ASD

OR

- diagnosis from a Primary Care Provider that includes a copy of results confirming a positive screen on an ASD screening tool
- confirmation that the child has been referred on for a comprehensive ASD evaluation

**The M-CHAT can be downloaded in English and Spanish at www.firstsigns.org
The PDDST II may be purchased at www.harcourtassessment.com
It is available in English and Spanish*